

REMARKS

Entry of the foregoing, reexamination and reconsideration of the subject application are respectfully requested in light of the amendments above and the comments which follow.

As correctly noted in the Office Action Summary, claims 39-47, 52-54, 56-63, 66, 67 and 69-76 were pending. By the present response, claims 39-47, 52-54, 56-58 and 63 have been canceled. Thus, upon entry of the present response, claims 59-62, 66, 67 and 69-76 remain pending and await further consideration on the merits.

Applicants thank Examiner Sergent for the careful attention given to the content of the claims presented in the previous response of December 8, 2006. The present response is substantively the same as the December 8, 2006 response, except that a typographical error in claims 60, 66, 69 and 70 has been corrected. Namely, the variables -- NX'1X<1' . . . NX'2X<2' . . . NX'3X<3' -- have been corrected to read (as unamended) variables: NX'1X<1" . . . NX'2X<2" . . . NX'3X<3".

Support for the foregoing amendments can be found, for example, in at least the following locations in the original disclosure: the original claims.

Entry of the foregoing is appropriate pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.116 for at least the following reasons: (1) by the cancellation of all remaining rejected claims, the foregoing amendments clearly place the application in condition for allowance; (2) the foregoing amendments do not create any new issues which would necessitate further search or substantive reexamination.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 39-47 and 63 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,044,171 to Muller et al. (hereafter "*Muller et al.*") on the grounds set forth in paragraph 2 of the Official Action.

By the present response, claims 39-47 and 63 have been canceled, thereby obviating the above-noted grounds for rejection.

Claims 52-54 and 56-58 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,369,207 to Wolff et al. (hereafter "*Wolff et al.*") on the grounds set forth in paragraph 4 of the Official Action.

By the present response, claims 52-54 and 56-58 have been canceled, thereby obviating the above-noted grounds for rejection.

ALLOWABLE CLAIMS

Applicants note with appreciation the indication in the Official Action that claims 59-62, 66, 67 and 69-76 are allowable. By the present response, applicants have canceled all other pending claims. Applicants expressly reserve the right to pursue these canceled claims in one or more continuation or divisional applications.

CONCLUSION

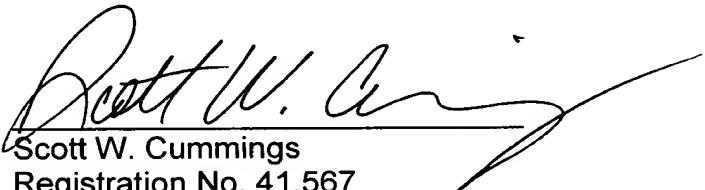
From the foregoing, further and favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner feel that any issues remain, it is requested that the undersigned be contacted so that any such issues may be adequately addressed and prosecution of the instant application expedited.

Respectfully submitted,

BUCHANAN INGERSOLL & ROONEY PC

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By:


Scott W. Cummings
Registration No. 41,567

P.O. Box 1404
Alexandria, VA 22313-1404
703 836 6620